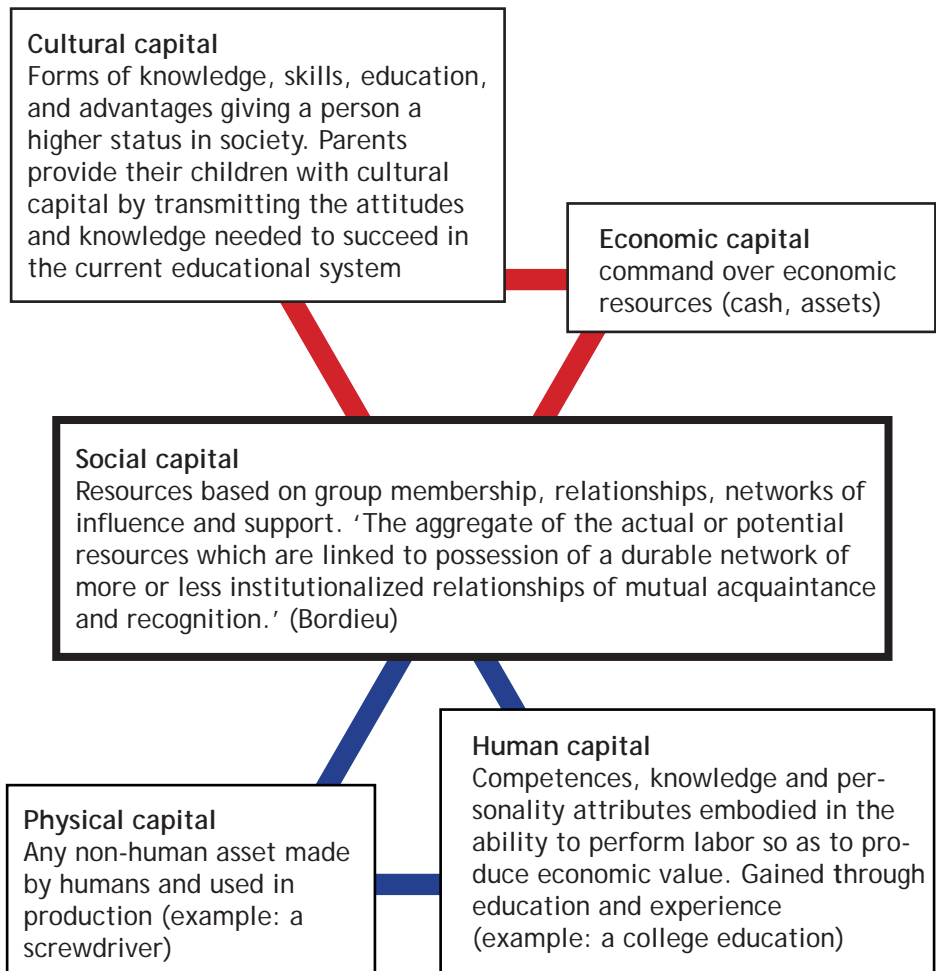


On affecting social and cultural capital

## On the concept of social capital



'social capital stands for the ability of actors to secure benefits by virtue of membership in social networks or other social structures'

(Portes A., 'Social Capital: Its Origins and Applications in Modern Sociology', 2000)

'...the core idea of social capital theory is that social networks have value. Just as a screwdriver (physical capital) or a college education (human capital) can increase productivity (both individual and collective) so too social contacts affect the productivity of individuals and groups.'

(Putnam R., 'Bowling Alone', 1999)

## On individual level

Refers to the structure of people's relationships (both close individual ones and distant, as a member of the same group) and the positive effects one may gain from them. This could be access to information and skill, knowledge of a job opportunity, economic resources, family support etc.

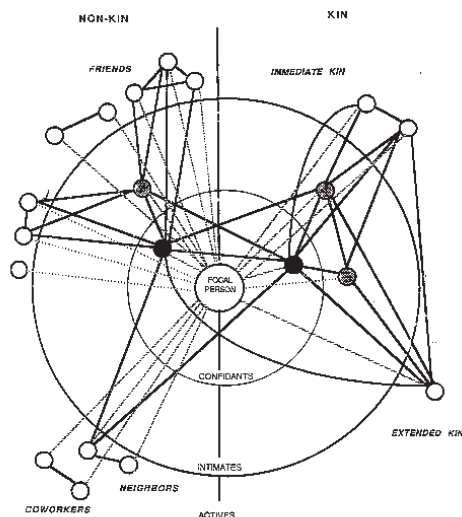


diagram mapping personal network  
([www.chass.utoronto.ca](http://www.chass.utoronto.ca))

## On urban/community level

- Associated with the level of 'civicness' in a community: 'Social capital also means features of social organizations, such as networks, norms and trust, that facilitate action and cooperation for mutual benefit. Working together is easier in a community blessed with a substantial stock of social capital' (Putnam, 1999)
- According to Robert Putnam, lack of social capital could be the downfall of democracy, and is connected to low levels of political involvement and low election turnouts.
- Affects the level of trust, vibrance, safety and well-being in a community, as well as its possibilities of economic growth.
- Has been labelled a bit of a '*cure-all for all the maladies affecting society*' (Portes, 2000), from poverty and crime to gentrification and lack of activity and ownership of neighbourhoods.

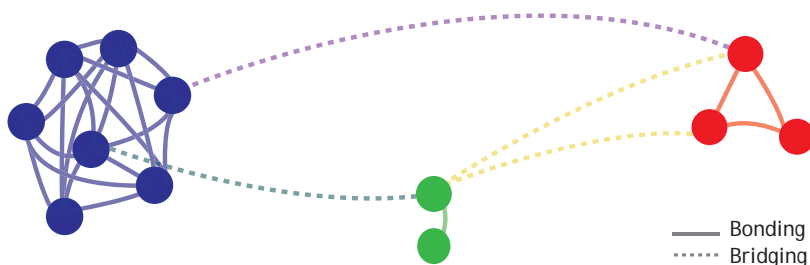
## On social capital and inequality

- **Not equally available to all:** Geographic and social isolation can limit the access to social capital. (Edwards and Foley, 1997) Jane Jacobs argues that cutting a neighbourhood off from its surroundings for instance by constructing freeways next to it can decrease its social capital.
- **The real value of social capital depends on the socioeconomic position of its source** - though a poorer neighbourhood might be rich in bonding social capital, this may not help the residents gain access to resources such as job prospects, financial benefits or better educational outcomes, as they are bonding with people that have equally poor access to these resources. (Edwards and Foley, 1997)

## An important distinction: 'Bridging' social capital vs 'bonding' social capital'

'...most important is the distinction between bonding (or exclusive) and bridging (or inclusive). Some forms of social capital are, by choice or necessity, inward looking and tend to reinforce exclusive identities and homogeneous groups. Examples of bonding capital include ethnic fraternal organizations, church-based women's reading groups, and fashionable country clubs. Other networks are outward looking and encompass people across diverse social cleavages. Examples of bridging social capital include the civil rights movement, many youth service groups, and ecumenical religious organizations. **Bonding social capital** is good for undergirding specific reciprocity and mobilizing solidarity. Dense networks in ethnic enclaves, for example, provide crucial social and psychological support for less fortunate members of the community, while furnishing start-up financing, markets, and reliable labor for local entrepreneurs. **Bridging networks**, by contrast, are better for linkage to external assets and for information diffusion. Economic sociologist Mark Granovetter has pointed out that when seeking jobs - or political allies - the 'weak' ties that link me to distant acquaintances who move in different circles from mine are actually more valuable than the 'strong' ties that link me to relatives and intimate friends whose sociological niche is very like my own. Bonding social capital is good for 'getting by', but bridging social capital is crucial for 'getting ahead'. Moreover, bridging social capital can generate broader identities and reciprocity, whereas bonding social capital bolsters our narrow selves. (...) Bonding social capital, by creating strong in-group loyalty, may also create strong out-group antagonism (...) and for that reason we might expect negative external effects to this form of social capital. Nevertheless, under many circumstances both bridging and bonding social capital can have powerfully positive social effects. Many groups simultaneously bond along some social dimensions and bridge across others. The black church, for example, brings together people of the same race and religion across class lines (...) bonding and bridging are not 'either-or' categories into which social networks can be neatly divided, but 'more or less' dimensions along which we can compare different forms of social capital.'

Robert Putnam, *Bowling Alone* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1999), p 22-23



# Social and cultural capital and New Urbanism

New Urbanism and smart growth have emerged as a reaction against the reality of sprawl and conventional suburban development, and formulate a strategy to create neighbourhood-based, sustainable and socially strong communities in many different variations. The strategy aims at promoting place-making, human scale, vibrance, demographic variation and high levels of social capital through promoting principles such as walkability, large amounts of public space and mixed use. The New Urbanism trend has grown popular, for instance in the sprawl-ridden United States, where the principles are used in a wide variety of urban development projects, from smaller towns to the HOPE VI programme for redevelopment of ghetto social housing. Critics have accused New Urbanism of being retrospective and creating 'the image of community rather than actual community' (Harvey, 1997). It is currently strongly discussed whether the built projects based on NU principles actually turn out to be strong communities rich in social capital - and if they do, to which degree this can actually be accredited to NU planning.

## Principles of New Urbanism ([www.newurbanism.org](http://www.newurbanism.org))

### 1. Walkability

- Most things within a 10-minute walk of home and work
- Pedestrian friendly street design (buildings close to street; porches, windows and doors; tree-lined streets; on street parking; hidden parking lots; garages in rear lane; narrow, slow speed streets)
- Pedestrian streets free of cars in special cases



### 2. Connectivity

- Interconnected street grid network disperses traffic and eases walking
- A hierarchy of narrow streets, boulevards, and alleys
- High quality pedestrian network and public realm makes walking pleasurable



### 3. Mixed-Use & Diversity

- A mix of shops, offices, apartments, and homes on site.
- Mixed-use within neighborhoods, blocks, and buildings
- Diversity of people (ages, income levels, cultures, and races)



### 4. Mixed Housing

- A range of types, sizes and prices in closer proximity

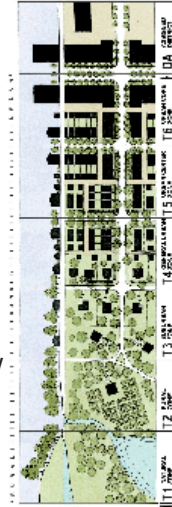
### 5. Quality Architecture & Urban Design

- Emphasis on beauty, human comfort, and creating a sense of place; Special placement of civic uses and sites within community. Human scale architecture & beautiful surroundings nourish the human spirit



## 6. Traditional Neighborhood Structure

- Discernable center and edge
- Public space at center
- Importance of quality public realm; public open space designed as civic art
- Contains a range of uses and densities within 10-minute walk
- Transect planning: Highest densities at town center; progressively less dense towards the edge. The transect is an analytical system that conceptualizes mutually reinforcing elements, creating a series of specific natural habitats and/or urban lifestyle settings. The Transect integrates environmental methodology for habitat assessment with zoning methodology for community design. The professional boundary between the natural and man-made disappears, enabling environmentalists to assess the design of the human habitat and the urbanists to support the viability of nature. This urban-to-rural transect hierarchy has appropriate building and street types for each area along the continuum.



## 7. Increased Density

- More buildings, residences, shops, and services closer together for ease of walking, to enable a more efficient use of services and resources, and to create a more convenient, enjoyable place to live.
- New Urbanism design principles are applied at the full range of densities from small towns, to large cities



## 8. Green Transportation

- A network of high-quality trains connecting cities, towns, and neighborhoods together
- Pedestrian-friendly design that encourages a greater use of bicycles, rollerblades, scooters, and walking as daily transportation



## 9. Sustainability

- Minimal environmental impact of development and its operations
- Eco-friendly technologies, respect for ecology and value of natural systems
- Energy efficiency
- Less use of finite fuels
- More local production
- More walking, less driving



## 10. Quality of Life

Taken together these add up to a high quality of life well worth living, and create places that enrich, uplift, and inspire the human spirit





## New Urbanism project: Orenco Station, Portland OR, USA

- Transit-oriented community development opened in 1997
- 400 single-family townhomes and cottages, 1400 apartments
- New Urbanism principles: walkability, mixed-use with commercial center and residential areas, mixed housing (medium-density complexes, single-family houses, cheaper flats on top of garages), private backyard space reduced, amount of public green spaces, small plazas, playgrounds, sports facilities etc increased.

### Social capital in Orenco Station

- Homogenous population (95% self-proclaimed white, monthly income 5000-5500 USD)

- High level of bonding social capital (within-neighbourhood cohesion, reports of neighbourly friendliness and social interaction, feeling of safety, high level of participation in formal and informal community groups)
- Exclusionary? Low level of bridging social capital
  - A) many original residents resistant to integrating more ethnically and financially diverse population into the community
  - B) some hostility within the neighbourhood to outsiders coming to use public amenities (parks etc.)

(Podobnik, B., *New Urbanism and the Generation of Social Capital: Evidence from Orenco Station*)



Walkable streets, large amount of public space, commercial walkable centre, social interaction

### ORENCO STATION

ILLUSTRATIVE OVERALL SITE PLAN  
MASTER DEVELOPER: PCL TRUST



Mixed housing types (single family, apartment buildings etc), walkway with greenery and public square space from lightrail station through commercial centre to housing area

## HOPE VI Project and social capital survey: Maverick Landing, East Boston, USA

HOPE VI is an American program aimed at redeveloping U.S. public housing developments into mixed-income communities. Most projects within the program, including Maverick Landing, are based on New Urbanism principles, and are aimed at increasing the positive effects of social capital through mixing residents from different income groups. While the project was under construction, old residents were relocated to other mixed-income housing, social housing or single-family homes in higher income areas. This provided the base for a survey on whether mix of income groups in itself fosters

social capital. While Maverick Landing has achieved a higher level of social capital (feeling of neighbourhood security, place-attachment, neighbourhood friendliness) after the redevelopment, the survey shows that this is closely linked to walkability and the amount of neighbourhood resources such as commercial areas, public spaces, kindergardens etc that provide space for casual encounters and distant social contact 'by view', rather than to the presence of mixed (higher) income groups.

(Curley, A., *Relocating the Poor: Social Capital and Neighbourhood Resources*)



Before: block-style buildings with little surrounding public space and wide streets with high level of car traffic and parking



After: Varied buildings facing publically accessible green spaces, narrower streets with wider sidewalks, close access to neighbourhood resources, recreational spaces by the water etc



## Housing project 'Sargfabrik', Vienna, Austria, 1996, Architects BKK-2



'The Sargfabrik is much more than a housing model— it's a way of life. Along with the luxurious roof garden, a range of common areas creates a landscape of communication and pleasure, with a cultural house, restaurant, kindergarten, and twenty-four-hour bathhouse that is also publically accessible. Parking spaces for cars were kept to a minimum in order to make room for the swimming area, and only by designating the building a "residence hall" could public funding be secured. The Sargfabrik and Miss Sargfabrik are owned by the Association for Integrative Lifestyle (VIL), which rents out the seventy-five units—maisonettes with floor areas of 45 m<sup>2</sup>, with the possibility of



linking up to six units—modeled as a collective. There is very little turnover. Identification and dedication are already evident in the second generation, some of whom have no intention of moving further away than the neighboring Miss Sargfabrik, the younger sociotope offshoot. Its thirty-nine units, including a number of living-working-ateliers, provide for new spatial experiences with angled walls and inclined floors. A community kitchen, library, and rehearsal room serve to augment the Sargfabrik's facilities.'

([www.wohnmodelle.at](http://www.wohnmodelle.at))



## The Sargfabrik

- Situated in central Vienna
- Established in an old coffin factory
- 15% of flats reserved for elderly, handicapped or displaced
- Owned by VIL, an association consisting of the occupants of the apartments. In case of moving out, the apartment belongs to the association itself, which is landlord, constructor and operator at the same time. Central decisions are made in general assemblies of the association.
- Inhabitants finance the collective establishments through a defined proportion of their rent, and pay for a "social capital" that helps other residents who have financial problems.

### Common/public facilities:

- Indoor swimming pool/sauna (open to public)
- Restaurant
- Room facilities for concerts, theatre and seminars (available for public use)

### 'Miss Sargfabrik' facilities:

- Youth club room
- Common living room
- Communal kitchen
- Library/home office space
- Shared laundromat



## Social capital in the Sargfabrik:

- The form of shared ownership fosters and relies on participation, trust and reciprocity
- Bonding and bridging social capital: High diversity among inhabitants (secured through 15% flats reserved for elderly/handicapped/misplaced and promoted through different types and sizes of units)
- High level of social interaction between inhabitants (though a value of the project is 'no pressure to participate', will non-participating residents not be stigmatised?)
- A producer or a result of social capital?(initially a result, but also a producer: inhabitant states; *'I initially moved here for the architecture, but now that is the least of it for me'* [www.wohnmodelle.at](http://www.wohnmodelle.at))
- Favours/attracts people with high interest in social interaction, and not those truly deprived of social capital?
- Highly selectional regarding new inhabitants that usually get in based on personal relations to the old inhabitants in the housing, and are chosen by the people in neighbouring flats.
- Promotes social capital in the surrounding areas as well (bridging type) through institutions of public interest, such as the bath, restaurant and kindergarden, thus helping to revitalize the neighbourhood. The willingness of residents to share their amenities with 'outsiders' stand in contrast to the unwillingness of Orenco Station residents, but notice difference in resident demographics, proximity to major city etc.





## In conclusion

Social and cultural capital in an urban context are complex concepts that are difficultly measured, connected to many different variables, and affecting them calls for action on many levels, planning of physical realities alone hardly suffices.

When looking at the case studies, it seems important to consider:

- 1) The level of bonding vs bridging social capital - attracting a homogenous group of citizens might have exclusionary effects (think about mixing housing typologies and costs, providing neighbourhood resources that attract different demographics etc.)
- 2) Neighbourhood resources and their placement, the demographic they may attract etc.
- 3) The connectivity to the surrounding neighbourhoods and possible incentives for non-residents to visit the neighbourhood (public amenities and institutions, such as schools, sports grounds, commercial areas etc.)
- 4) Socioeconomic and cultural mix in a neighbourhood - it remains a question whether this will have a direct positive effect on the level of social capital, and whether it will lead people to form bonds across cultural and class cleavages, or they will lead 'parallel lives' in the same community. However, when combined with a high level of shared neighbourhood resources (schools, public spaces, commercial areas, sports grounds etc.), studies indicate that people will still get familiarized at least 'by view', just by being present in the same space, and that this might lead to enhanced social capital, trust and reciprocity and mutual identification, although deeper bonds may not form.

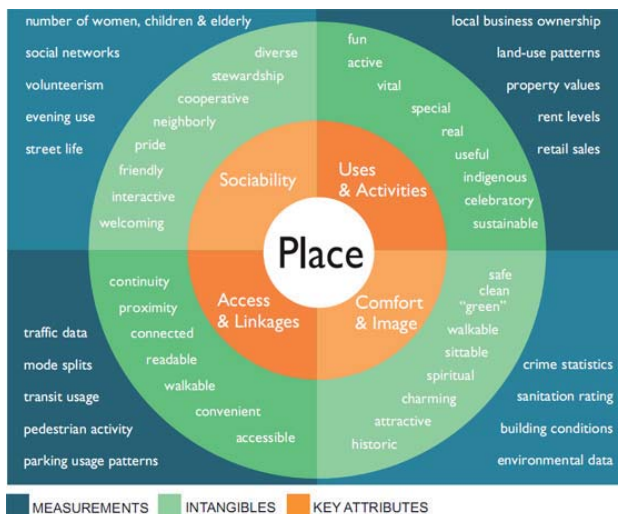


Diagram: Key for evaluating a public space, and assessing whether it has the key qualities of sociability, activity, access and comfort. (<http://www.placemakingchicago.com/about/qualities.asp>)

## Notes

### On social capital:

Putnam Robert. *Bowling Alone: The collapse and revival of American community*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1999

Alessandro Portes. *Social Capital: Its Origins and Applications in Modern Sociology*. In Knowledge and social capital: Foundations and applications, edited by Eric L. Lesser. Boston : Butterworth-Heinemann, 2000

Bob Edwards & Michael Foley. *Social Capital and the Political Economy of Our Discontent*. American Behavioral Scientist 40, 669 (1997), <http://spabs.highwire.org/cgi/reprint/40/5/669>

Thomas Sander. *Social Capital and New urbanism: Leading a Civic Horse to Water?* National Civic Review 91:3 (Fall 2002), pp 213-234. [http://www.ncl.org/publications/ncr/91-3/ncr91-3\\_chapter2.pdf](http://www.ncl.org/publications/ncr/91-3/ncr91-3_chapter2.pdf)

David Harvey. *The New Urbanism and the Communitarian Trap*. Harvard Design Magazine 1 (Winter/Spring 1997). <http://mitpress.mit.edu/HDM>

New Urbanism principles: [www.newurbanism.org](http://www.newurbanism.org)

Diagram for place-evaluation: <http://www.placemakingchicago.com/about/qualities.asp>

### Case studies:

#### Orenco Station, Portland, USA

Bruce Podobnik. *New Urbanism and the Generation of Social Capital: Evidence from Orenco Station*. National Civic Review 91:3 (Fall 2002), pp 245-256. <http://www3.interscience.wiley.com/cgi-bin/fulltext/104541073/PDFSTART>

Photos and project description: <http://www.planetizen.com/node/92>

#### Maverick Landing, Boston, USA

Alexandra Curley. *Relocating the Poor: Social Capital and Neighborhood Resources*. Journal of Urban Affairs 32, no.1 (January 2010) <http://www3.interscience.wiley.com/cgi-bin/fulltext/123243550/PDFSTART>

[http://www.hud.gov/offices/cpd/environment/library/maverick\\_landing.doc](http://www.hud.gov/offices/cpd/environment/library/maverick_landing.doc)

<http://www.iconarch.com/live/mavericklanding.html>

#### Sargfabrik & Miss Sargfabrik, Vienna, Austria

Armin Schmauß. *Housing Project Sargfabrik, Vienna, Austria*. Mobility Management and Housing Case Study (February 2008). [http://www.add-home.eu/docs/FGM\\_Vienna\\_Sargfabrik\\_ADDHOME.pdf](http://www.add-home.eu/docs/FGM_Vienna_Sargfabrik_ADDHOME.pdf)

Fotos and project description: <http://www.wohnmodelle.at/index.php?id=90,81,0,0,1,0>